

PRESCRIBED BURN RESULTS IN RESIDUAL SMOKE

On Monday October 1st a prescribed burn of 15 acres was conducted at Camp Edwards. At 4:30 PM the burn crew began to finish the burn and conduct "mop up" operations (extinguishing the fire.) During the late night hours the wind shifted, out of the northwest, bringing in a cooler air mass. The air mass resulted in fog plus any residual smoke that was in the air pooled down with the fog. The Forestdale neighborhood of Sandwich was affected by the smoke being pushed down to the ground. Possible weather conditions tonight may result in cold air moving into the region possibly resulting in more smoke from yesterdays' prescribe burn being pushed to the ground.

As soon as they were made aware of the situation, the Mass National Guard contacted the Sandwich Fire Dept and continued to closely monitor the situation throughout the night. A press release was sent to local radio stations in the morning informing the local community about the smoke and its cause.

Numerous fully trained wildfire fighting professionals from various local fire departments, state agencies, and non profit conservation organizations participate in the Camp Edwards prescribed burns. Using the best technology available, the Mass National Guard closely monitors weather conditions prior to conducting all prescribed burns in order to avoid smoke impacting any residences; the conditions causing smoke to settle in the Forestdale neighborhood from the October 1st burn were unpredicted and we apologize for any inconvenience to the residents of Forestdale.

The Mass National's Guard's Natural Resource Program has conducted prescribed burns for over 20 years, for the past five years about four burns per year have been conducted averaging 385 acres a year. Prescribed burns are conducted at Camp Edwards by the Massachusetts National Guard to reduce the threat of wildfire by removal of forest debris (twigs, leaves) that act as fuel for fire. Below is an excerpt from neighborhood notices that are mailed out to Forestdale prior to the burn season each year. Newspaper ads are run every week during burn season notifying residents of the Upper Cape that prescribed burns may be conducted during that week.

Two days prior to burns, town administrators, boards of health, and fire departments are again notified (by fax) of the intent to burn, with specific time frames included.

The day before a planned burn the town administrators, boards of health, fire departments, on-base commands, cleanup program managers, the Upper Cape Water Cooperative, Upper Cape selectmen MMR representatives, principals of the Forestdale school and the on-base Bourne school, State police, VA cemetery, the sheriff's department, and others are notified by email that a burn is planned for the next day.

Media notices are sent out to the local radio stations the day before and the day of announcing the intent to burn.

If a member of the community has any questions or concerns, please contact Lynda Wadsworth, Community Involvement Manager at 508-968-5152.

Camp Edwards Prescribed Burns

The Massachusetts Army National Guard Natural Resource Program in coordination with the Sandwich Fire Department is reducing the risk of wildfire hazard in and to the Upper Cape through prescribed burns to be conducted at Camp Edwards. Prescribed burns aid in the removal of forest debris and underbrush, and in **reducing the potential for wildfire**. Firefighter and community safety are the primary concerns during a prescribed fire; so extreme precautions are taken during any prescribed fire to ensure public and firefighter safety.

What: A prescribed burn is a controlled application of fire to reduce the threat of wildfire and maintain a healthy habitat. The prescribed burns planned for Camp Edwards will be ignited on the ground by trained and experienced professionals. The prescribed burn is started in the morning, suppressed by nightfall, and monitored closely until it is completely extinguished.

Safety First: Numerous fully trained wildfire fighting professionals from various local fire departments, state agencies, and non profit conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy will be participating in this action (prescribed burn). The Sandwich Fire Department will be conducting patrols in the community during the burn. Weather conditions are monitored closely before a prescribed burn and if weather conditions will not allow for the safest prescribed burn, it will be postponed.

When: Due to the need to monitor weather closely to conduct the safest burn, the actual day of the burn will not be known for certain until 24 hours beforehand. Local radio stations will air Public Service Announcements the day before a prescribed burn.

Why: Prescribed Fires aid in reducing vegetation that increases wildfire risk and benefit the ecosystem in our fire adapted natural communities. The second enclosed map shows areas identified through computer modeling that are at the highest risk for wildfire. The area adjacent to the Forestdale Community has been identified to be at higher risk for wildfire. The Fire Chief of the Sandwich Fire Department gives his full support to the effort of reducing this risk using prescribed burns.

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